

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
----- 093313

O R 141335Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 950
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KHARTOUM 0139

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ET, US, SU
SUBJECT: RELEASE KAGNEW 2/CISCO 3

REF: STATE 007002

BEGIN SUMMARY. SECRETARY'S LETTER OF APPRECIATION
DELIVERED VICE PRESIDENT BAGHIR JAN 14. BAGHIR WAS UNDERSTANDING
RE OUR NEGATIVE RESPONSES ON POINTS RAISED BY ELF. HE MADE
CLEAR GOS WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS (NOTABLY VIS-A-VIS ELF)
BRING ABOUT RELEASE CISCO THREE BUT AT SAME TIME INQUIRED
PARTICULARLY RE STATUS AND PROSPECTS SUDANESE/USG BILATERAL
PROGRAMS. BELIEVE WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT SIGNIFICANT SUDANESE
HELP ON HOSTAGE ISSUE MAY NOT BE MAINTAINED INDEFINITELY WITHOUT
SOME EVIDENCE TO THE SUDANESE THAT SUCH HELP PAYS OFF IN TERMS
NORMALIZATION RELATIONS WITH US. END SUMMARY

1. IN ABSENCE NIMEIRI IN LONDON, I GAVE SECRETARY'S
LETTER OF APPRECIATION (REFTEL) TO FIRST VICE PRES BAGHIR THIS
MORNING. FONMIN AHMED ALSO PRESENT BUT TOOK LITTLE
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PART IN CONVERSATION. BAGHIR SAID HE APPRECIATED SECRETARY'S

COMMUNICATION BUT INDICATED IN ARABIC TO AHMED THAT IT DID NOT GO AS FAR AS HE HAD HOPED. I SAID WE WERE GIVING NO PUBLICITY TO SECRETARY'S LETTER AND BAGHIR SAID THEY WOULD NOT DO SO EITHER.

2. DRAWING ON STATE 007740, I THEN REFERRED DEPARTMENT'S INITIAL PRESS COMMENT ON CASE, STRESSING SPOKESMAN'S CONFIRMATION NO RANSOM OR OTHER CONCESSION GIVEN WAS ONLY MADE WHEN QUESTION ASKED IN ORDER MAKE OUR POSITION CLEAR. WE REGRETTED IF SUCH NECESSARY PUBLIC CLARIFICATION COMPLICATED SUDANESE EFFORTS ON BEHALF REMAINING CAPTIVES. BAGHIR SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND DID NOT PRESS THE POINT. I THEN GAVE BAGHIR AND FONMIN COPIES OF KAGNEW 2 JOINT STATEMENT (STATE 006754), STRESSING IT HAD BEEN ISSUED LOCALLY JANUARY 12. RECOGNIZING SUDANESE SENSITIVITIES OVER HELPFUL GOS ROLE, PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN THIS CASE HAD BEEN LIMITED TO THESE TWO.

3. ON BASIS STATE 07741 AND 008422 (NOTAL) I THEN STRESSED LONG-STANDING NATURE OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WITH ETHIOPIA AND REITERATED TO BAGHIR THAT SUCH ARRANGEMENTS COULD NOT BE TURNED ON AND OFF LIKE FAUCET. HOWEVER, ELF COULD BE INFORMED THAT REPORT THAT HAD CITED ALLEGING \$300 MILLION ARMS AID AGREEMENT WITH EMPG IS ERRONEOUS AND THAT NO SUCH TRANSACTION IS CONTEMPLATED. FOR GAGHIR'S OWN INFORMATION DEPARTMENT HAD JUST INFORMED ME OF MILITARY AID TO ETHIOPIA OF WHICH I HAD NOT BEEN SPECIFICALLY AWARE DURING OUR JAN 9 TALK. I OUTLINED ITEMS IN ACCORDANCE PARA 4S TATE 008422. BAGHIR COMMENTED THAT HE COULD UNDERSTAND CONTINUATION OF ROUTINE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP BUT SUCH ITEMS AS TANKS AND AIRCRAFT APPEARED EXCEPTIONAL ASSISTANCE WHICH, IF GIVEN MONETARY VALUE, MIGHT ADD UP TO \$300 MILLION FIGURE QUOTED CH ELF.

4. ON ELF FOOD/MEDICINE PLEAS, VICE PRESIDENT WAS GIVEN SUBSTANCE PARD 3 STATE 007741 AS MODIFIED BY STATE 007876. WE RECOGNIZED GOS WOULD PROBABLY NOT REGARD THIS RESPONSE AS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL BUT NEVERTHELESS FELT IT NECESSARY NOT ONLY BECAUSE ELF STILL HOLDS ONE HOSTAGE BUT ALSO TO AVOID IMPRESSION BEING CREATED ANYWHERE IN WORLD THAT WE PREPARED TAKE ANY SORT OF PUTATIVE

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DEAL WITH KIDNAPPERS OF OUR CITIZENS. BAGHIR REPLIED OUR REFUSAL WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR ERITREANS TO UNDERSTAND. PERHAPS MEN WITH GUNS SHOULD NOT GET SUCH HELP BUT WHAT ABOUT THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN. ELF LETTER HAD NOT MENTIONED MICHALKE AND THERE WAS NO QUESTION ERITREANS SEEKING BLACKMAIL USG BY CONTINUING HOLD HIM. I EXPLAINED WE UNDERSTOOD THIS BUT WISHED AVOID ANY STEP WHICH COULD BE SEEN ANYWHERE AS WEAKENING OUR GENERAL ANTI-TERRORISM POLICY. MOREOVER THERE WERE STILL MANY AMERICANS IN ASMARA AND WE

WISHED TO DO NOTHING WHICH COULD EVEN BY IMPLICATION PREJUDICE
THEIR FUTURE SAFETY.

6. BAGHIR SAID ERITREANS WERE NEVERTHELESS HUMAN BEINGS.
HE ASKED THAT DEPARTMENT RECONSIDER HDOVISION SOME FOOD MD
HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. AHMED INTERJECTED THAT SUDAN
HARBORS SOME 100, ERITREAN REFUGEES, PLUS 30,000 WHO
HAVE BEEN HERE FOR SOME YEARS; I REITERATED THAT WE COULD NOT
PROVIDE FOOD AND MEDICINE TO THOSE HOLDING AMERICAN HOSTAGES
INSIDE ERITREA. AHMED REPLIED: "YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY CORRECT,

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 KHARTOUM 0139

EXDIS

BUT WHAT ABOUT INNOCENT REFUGEES WE ARE TRYING TO FEED?"
BAHIR NOTED ANY SUCH AID COULD BE PASSED THROUGH THIRD
PARTY SUCH AS GOS OR UNHCR WITHOUT MAKING DIRECT
REQUEST. HE INDICATED THAT HE VERY MUCH HOPED USG
COULD RESPOND ALONG THESE LINES. I LIMITED MY RESPONSE TO
STATING THAT I WAS WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS

POINT BUT WOULD BE GLAD CALL BAGHIR'S COMMENTS TO
WASHINGTON'S ATTENTION.

7. BAGHIR INDICATED SUDAN WOULD CONTINUE ASSIST CISCO 3. THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF SUDAN WISHING TO BE "REWARDED" FOR SUCH HUMANITARIAN HELP TO CITIZENS OF FRIENDLY POWER. SUDANESE STILL APPRECIATED MAJOR USG ROLE IN ROAD-BUILDING IN SIXTIES. HE THEN SAID HE OUT OF TOUCH WITH CURRENT USG ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO SUDAN AND REQUESTED A RUNDOWN. I RECALLED SUDANESE ACTION IN RELEASING

KHARTOUM 8 HAD PRECIPITATED "HOLDS" ON OUR NORMAL ACTIVITIES. SOME OF THESE, SUCH AS EXIM AND OPIC, HAD ALREADY CONFIDENTIAL

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BEEN REMOVED. ON OUR PART, WE DID NOT REGARD THESE OR FUTURE NORMALIZATION STEPS AS "REWARDS" FOR SPECIFIC SUDANESE GOOD BEHAVIOR. IT WAS NEVERTHELESS TRUE THAT SUDAN HAD CREATED NEGATIVE IMAGE AT HOME WHICH IT WOULD BE NECESSARY REMOVE. GOS ROLE IN RELEASE KAGNEW 2 WAS TYPE OF THING THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS ENLIST CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR RETURN TO BETTER DAYS. BAGHIR SAID HE UNDERSTOOD BUT COMMENTED WITH BROAD SMILE: "BUT YOU SHOULD PUSH". I REPLIED I WAS NATURALLY INTERESTED IN IMPROVING OUR BILATERAL TIES BUT THAT CONTINUED COOPERATION GOS WAS INDISPENSABLE.

8. AT END CONVERSATION, AHMED SUGGESTED HE TELLPRESS I HAD CALLED TO EXPRESS USG APPREIATION FOR GOS ROLE IN RELEASING HOSTAGES. BAGHIR AND I THREW COLD WATER ON THIS. IT WAS AGREED AHMED WOALD STATE WE HAD DISCUSSED IN DETAIL CURRENT STATUS OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND HAD REVIEWED SEVERAL ITEMS OF IMMEDIATE MUTUAL INTEREST. HE REMAINED CLOSETED WITH BAHIR AS I LEFT AND HIS PRECISE LINE WITH PRESS NOT YET KNOWN.

9. COMMENT: CONVERSATION LASTED WELL OVER AN HOUR. BAGHIR WAS CORDIAL BUT FRANK THROUGHOUT AND OBVIOUSLY SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED MY PRESENTATION CONTAINED NOTHING OF SPECIFIC BENEFIT TO SUDAN DEPSITE SUSTAINED, TOP-LEVEL GOS HELP. WE UNDERSTAND SPECIFICALLY THAT, IN THEIR EFFORTS RESPOND TO NIMEIRI'S INSTRUCTIONS, SUDANESE SECURITY PEOPLE DID CONSIDERABLE ARM TWISTING WITH ELF CONTACTS. WHILE SUDANESE WILL CONTINUE TO HELP US ON HOSTAGE ISSUE, THEY CLEARLY DO HOPE SEE SOME CONCRETE SIGNS SOON THAT THIS POSTURE BENEFITS SUDAN IN TERMS NORMALIZATION USG/GOS TIES. SEEN FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE, MOST USEFUL STEPS WE COULD TAKE TO ACCELERATE CISCO THREE RELEASE PROCESS MIGHT WELL BE THOSE TAKEN IN WASHINGTON (SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED PARA 6 KHARTOUM 0082). IN ACCORDANCE DEPT. INSTRUCTIONS (SECTO 13001) WE HAVE BEEN INDICATING DISCREETLY TO GOS FOR MONTHS THAT SUCCESS ON THEIR PART IN OBTAINING RELEASE AMERICANS

WOULD IMPROVE SUDANESE IMAGE AMONG THOSE WHO RETAIN SOME RESERVATIONS RE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS IN WAKE RELEASE KHARTOUM 8. TIME HAS SURELY NOW ARRIVED TO GIVE SUCH QUIET ASSURANCES SOME CONCRETE FORM, IN PART TO ENCOURAGE GOS TO MAINTAIN AND EVEN
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INTENSIFY ITS EFFORTS WITH RESPECT REMAINING HOSTAGES.

10. WE HOPE GOS WILL BE EQUALLY SUCCESSFUL IN SECURING RELEASE MICHALKE FROM PLF. HOWEVER, WISH REMIND DEPT THAT GOS HAS THROUGHOUT THIS LONG AND TORTUOUS AFFAIR STRESSED ITS MORE TENUOUS CONTACTS WITH PLF AND CONSEQUENT RELATIVE INABILITY DO MUCH FOR US RE CISCO 2. EVEN SO, THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS GOS COOPERATION WITH PLF EXTERNAL LEADERSHIP TO PUT PRESSURE ON PLF INSIDE ERITREA TO RELEASE THEM.
BREWER

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